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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY

RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001497

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY URGES AHMADINEJAD TO ACCEPT P5/1 OFFER

REF: A. ISTANBUL 439

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1405

Classified By: CDA Doug Silliman, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. According to an MFA readout, President Gul told visiting Iranian President Ahmadinejad August 15 that Iran should take advantage of the P5/1 refreshed package and urged the Iranians to be constructive on regional issues. Ahmadinejad did not respond substantively, other than to deny a military aspect to Iran's nuclear program. Gul advised Ahmadinejad that the American public favors a tough approach on Iran and he should not expect U.S. presidential elections to soften U.S. policy. Ankara is not optimistic Iran will respond positively in the near term, observing that the Iranians are "not ready to make a decision yet." The GOI fears it will "lose" if negotiations with the P5/1 fail, while Iranian leaders eye each other warily for any sign of weakness on which they can capitalize for political gain. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) As a neighbor, Turkey could not put off indefinitely President Ahmadinejad's August 14-15 visit to Turkey (ref A), new MFA DG for Middle East and South Asia Huseyin Dirioz told CDA August 18. He emphasized the high cost of failure for Turkey if the diplomatic process with Iran fails, resulting in either military conflict or Iran developing a nuclear weapon or nuclear weapon capacity. The GOT, he underscored, opposes nuclear weapons in Iran. Turkey believes it is uniquely positioned to deliver frank messages to the Iranians without offending them, and sincerely hopes Iran will engage.

[1](#)3. (C) Reading from a Presidency document marked "secret," Dirioz said Gul was blunt with Ahmadinejad, telling him Iran should:

-- Take advantage of the P5/1 refreshed package, make good use of the "freeze-for-freeze" offer and approach negotiations positively.

-- Appreciate the U.S. effort to engage Iran more directly, evidenced by Secretary Rice's signature on the package and U/S Burn's participation at the Geneva talks.

-- Act responsibly in the Middle East and pursue constructive regional policies.

[1](#)4. (C) Gul argued there are major risks to Iran and the region if the diplomatic process stays locked; it is in Iran's interest to pursue the path of negotiations (a message

Dirioz said Gul underlined by reminding the Iranians that Turkey told the Iraqis the same in 2003). If the GOI takes steps to normalize its position in the international community, the government can focus on economic growth and development.

15. (C) Ahmadinejad responded neither positively nor negatively to these messages. According to Dirioz, Gul's impression is that Tehran believes that if it enters into a second phase of negotiations which then fail, Iran will be in a worse position than it is in now. In Tehran recently for the NAM ministerial, Dirioz observed a heightened sense of Persian nationalism and noted that Iranian leaders seemed to be carefully watching each other for hints of softness and betrayal from which they could gain political advantage. None want to be the first to cave in.

16. (C) Gul advised Ahmadinejad not to wait for U.S. presidential elections to engage. Gul told Ahmadinejad that the U.S. public is united on a tough approach to Iran and elections will not change that position.

NO ENERGY DEAL, YET

17. (C) As noted in ref A, the Turks and the Iranians concluded minor agreements on tourism, transportation, national archives, and environment. The two Presidents also recognized the 50th anniversary of cultural relations between Turkey and Iran in their respective statements, though no formal accord was signed. Dirioz attached greater importance to the protocol the two sides signed on counter-terrorism,

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counter-narcotics and border security. Turkey and Iran did not conclude a new energy agreement. According to Dirioz, the two countries achieved no progress since last year's energy MOU, so there was nothing to agree on. Iran, however, was keen on concluding an agreement: Deputy FM Sheikh-Attar's large advance delegation to Ankara included numerous energy experts (ref B).

18. (C) Ministry of Energy and MFA officials told us in the weeks leading up to Ahmadinejad's visit that an agreement on energy was unlikely, but also noted that technical discussions on natural gas projects continue between Turkish state oil company TPAO and the Iranians. Press reports August 19 quoted Energy Minister Guler as saying he and FM Babacan would travel to Iran in 15 days (on or about September 2) to conclude an energy agreement. The GOT is particularly eager to move forward on the electricity MOU, and believes it can complete this deal without triggering the Iran Sanctions Act.

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